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SUBJECT Report on the CIA

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: There are many things about intelligence that are very difficult. There are many things that are, frankly, not fully decent. My job, in collecting intelligence, is to do the indecent things as decently as possible and to keep a floor of decency below which we will not stoop.

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DAN RATHER: For years, the most secret and the most closed installation in the United States has been the Central Intelligence Agency. It is for the first time now just starting to open up, a little. In the controversy over how open this country's intelligence activities should be, the Carter Administration opted for a cautious move toward more, not less, public knowledge. That's probably the reason that the government is talking about the possibility of public tours of the CIA Headquarters, and the reason that the CIA, for the first time, permitted television cameras into its headquarters late this spring.

60 Minutes had to accept several restrictions for this first televised tour. First, we agreed not to show personnel who were scheduled for overseas assignment, and we submitted our film for review so that such personnel inadvertently filmed could be eliminated from the broadcast.

Second, we were limited in the activities we were allowed to film.

And finally, we agreed not to relate one part of the headquarters to others, so that the basic layout of the building remains secret.

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There were no limitations or right of review in our interview with the new CIA chief, Admiral Stansfield Turner.

You get to CIA Headquarters by driving a few miles outside of Washington. The main gate resembles that of a military installation. No one enters without proper credentials. Beyond the heavily guarded gates, the thing that strikes a first-time visitor is how beautiful the grounds are. The whole place looks more like a college campus than a spy headquarters.

We know that many high-ranking CIA people believe it was a mistake for us to have been allowed in at all. We did not kid ourselves, and we urge you not to kid yourselves. Don't be misled. This is a brief tour. Only a small portion of the CIA building will be seen. You may be disappointed by what you see. Certainly you will be if you expect to see spies sneaking around corners a la James Bond.

This probably is the most sensitive room that we're being allowed in, and there's a lot in this room that we can't show you. There's much in here that we're not even being allowed to see. Keeping in mind that basically what the CIA does is gather information, what's done in this room is gather information from signals. This is the Signal Analysis Division.

We all know that the Soviet Union, among others, is sending out all kinds of signals on any given day to their military people, to their intelligence people, to their diplomats.

We're not able to show you this man's face at all, but he has agreed to tell us in general terms what it is that's being done here.

What's happening?

MAN: Well, this is a Soviet radar signal. We're using this equipment to display the signal. We can measure the characteristics of it, and from that determine the function and the relationship to an overall weapons system.

There are a number of Soviet radar signals that you can hear. The one of particular interest is the one that we have stabilized on this display.

RATHER: This is what? This is a stationary display of the same thing we saw over there.

MAN: A stationary display. We've processed it with the computer, and now it allows us to go in and really just make -- we can make more precise measurements on the data.

RATHER: Give me an example of what you could learn from

display by studying it in detail.

MAN: This is an aircraft radar; it's on an airplane, and it would be used to look at other aircraft.

RATHER: When the CIA agreed for the first time ever to allow in television cameras, we at CBS News frankly didn't know how much access we would be allowed. As it has worked out, we've been allowed a lot. There is, however, at least one division of the Central Intelligence Agency we are absolutely prohibited from showing, the Directorate of Operations. This is the covert, or secret, intelligence-gathering arm of the agency. Whatever cloak-and-dagger, James-Bond-style work the CIA still does -- and it is considerable, in our judgment -- it is directed from behind these closed doors. They are never opened. The work that goes on in here is so secret that the head of the division, the DDO, as he's known around here, the Deputy Director of Operations, is never publicly identified; and so secret that when it was arranged for us to film up here, the agency insisted that the numbers come off indicating, even, what floor this operation is on.

Now, what's behind this door, which, like most other doors in the building, has its combination lock on it, what's behind this door is to me one of the more interesting places in the building, although it's a small, rather confined room, interesting for this reason: The principal role of the CIA is to gather information, but another role is to analyze the information after they've got it, which is what's going on in here. These are analysts working on computers, and this person is analyzing OPEC oil prices.

What you are looking at is called a current accounts balance. From this the CIA projects, for example, a cash surplus this year for the Saudi Arabian Government of \$23.2 billion. Useful information when it comes to negotiations.

The week we filmed this sequence, the Carter Administration was doing just that, negotiating new agreements with the Saudis.

Another project being worked on in this room, this day, we were told, is an analysis of worldwide coffee and metal prices. If the President, for example, should ask, "Are coffee prices being manipulated? If so, how much and by whom?" the CIA is supposed to be able to tell him.

Despite all the impressive technology, the CIA says that 80% of its analytical work still is done by humans: one person reading, thinking, and then drawing conclusions.

In this room, still another type of analysis. Several weeks ago, in the home of a U.S. intelligence officer stationed overseas, this telephone was suspected of being bugged. Because the phone was used to contact secret agents working in the field,

the CIA felt that the source of the bug must be found. We were not told where the phone was discovered, but were assured that measures have already been taken to insure the safety of the agents.

MAN: We have removed the instrument. We have made checks on it, and we have made X-ray shots of this capacitor can. A normal capacitor can would look like this here. Now, on this particular instrument we found that an X-ray view of the capacitor can shows much added circuitry. And now, take and analyze this capacitor, and from a metallurgical, optical and chemical analysis to see if we can identify the country who probably made this device or installed this device.

RATHER: In this room is what the agency calls Data Comm, Data Communications Center. It's a communications center providing a wide variety of computer services for CIA terminals in stations around the Washington area, CIA facilities inside and outside this main headquarters building. The high-speed data switch which is the heart of this operation also connects with the computer networks of other intelligence agencies, for example, the DIA, the Defense Department's own in-house intelligence outfit.

Computer networks such as these have revolutionized the intelligence business. Advanced computer technology, especially that interconnected with spy-in-the-sky satellites, is one of the advantages American intelligence experts believe they have over the Soviets.

Let me remind you that the agency has never admitted to the use of spy-in-the-sky satellites.

This is Communications Central to the CIA worldwide. Official name Operations Center. It is manned around-the-clock, around-the-year, every year. It is here that initial decisions are made as to who is to be informed about what and under what priority. Should the Director be awakened and told? What about the President? When a hot message comes in, one of the regular supervisors in this room starts making those kinds of decisions.

Its sources are varied. Classified messages come in on high-speed printers. Classified telephone calls are kept secret through the use of so-called scrambler systems. They confuse anyone who might be listening in.

As in most newsrooms, there are the ever-present wire servicers: AP, UPI, Reuters, The New York Times News Service. But the CIA has another wire service printer no news agency has: FBIS, Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

On the day we filmed the Operations Center, there was a coup attempt in Angola. Rebel forces unfriendly to the ruling

Marxist government and its Cuban allies attacks Angola's principal radio station. The rebels apparently took control for a short while, but Cuban troops quickly moved in and helped to oust the rebels. The attempted coup was over.

Regular commercial news wire services had only started to report the coup when special FBIS wires already were reporting the coup had failed.

The agency's current director is Admiral Stansfield Turner, native of Highland Park, Illinois; Annapolis classmate of President Carter; and later a Rhodes Scholar. Turner insisted that he keep his naval rank. Critics say this raises doubts about his commitment to remain in the CIA, and they suggest that he is hoping to use this job as a catapult to the one he really wants: Chairman of the military Joint Chiefs. He denies that. And there is some reason to believe that Turner sees himself remaining in intelligence with an expanded role.

He brought with him six Navy officers as staff. Some CIA oldtimers claim that this Navy Mafia, as they call it, isolates Turner from the regulars.

On and off the record, most CIA staffers, new and old, do agree that Turner is a quick learner with a strong sense of command. His record of grasping quickly the complexities of the intelligence community and managing them with sensitivity and firmness has won him considerable respect. His plan to reorganize the whole American intelligence community, inside and outside the CIA, has stirred hot debate in the Defense Department, in Congress, and in the White House.

What Turner apparently wants is reduced Defense Department control, with one person, having Cabinet-level rank and answerable directly to the President and Congress, responsible for all spying worldwide, human and satellite. Suspicions run high that Turner wants to be that one person. The Admiral flatly refuses to discuss the matter publicly.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't think it's a good idea to take up the details of an ongoing Executive Branch discussion and proposal in the public until we have come to a joint opinion; and I'm sure we will and we'll do it amicably.

RATHER: Amicably.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. There are attempts in the press to portray Secretary Brown and myself at each other's throat, and nothing could be further from the truth. We're working together, we're meeting together, we see and understand the problem in identical terms. We...

RATHER: In identical terms?

ADMIRAL TURNER: We may -- we see the problem in identical terms. We may come to different solutions for it or different ways of approaching it. But we're doing so with no rancor, with no hard feelings, and it's a good, honest debate.

RATHER: This has been in print as describing your point of view, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to say, "Well, that's accurate." "It's not accurate," or, "I'm not going to say whether it's accurate or not."

ADMIRAL TURNER: No comment.

RATHER: All right.

Is it fair to say, Admiral, that one of the reasons this is an important national decision -- you've said yourself this is a very important decision -- is over who is to control the budget for the National Security Agency and the National Reconnaissance Office?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, that's one of the many issues being considered in this. But today I have a considerable influence on those budgets, on all the budgets of the intelligence community. So we're talking nuances of degree here, and there are many permutations and combinations, and by no means all of the ones being considered were outlined in this story in the press.

Military concerns are only factor of the intelligence problem. It's a very important factor, and particularly today. If you look back 30 years, when we were just militarily predominant in the world, whether we had good intelligence or not was important but not critical. Today, when we do not have a large military edge, intelligence may make the difference. It may be like the Ultra secret that tipped the scales very much on our side.

But today we're also in a very different economic position. Thirty years ago, when this agency was founded, we were totally economically independent. Today we are interdependent. And if we don't know what's going on in the rest of the world economically, we're going to lose our shirt, like we did in 1972 with the grain deal with the Soviet Union.

RATHER: The new image could not have been more clearly expressed than by the activities Turner allowed us to film. Never before, to our knowledge, has a Director of the CIA allowed himself to be photographed in such a wide variety of circumstances.

This says much about the man as a person. He is reachable and open, or, at the very least, he is eager to appear that way to the press.

Some top officials within the agency say he is not reachable to them, that they hear from him only by memo, referred to as T-grams, that he is sheltered by the Navy staff he brought with him. We frankly don't know enough to judge how open he is as a manager and director. We do know that he has set new standards for being open to the press.

One reason, according to him, is the agency's need for wider public understanding and support. Making himself available to reporters and cameras is part of his way of trying to get his message across, both to the people inside the intelligence community and to the general public. The message he wants most to get across right now is the need for new ways of controlling all of the country's intelligence activities.

Typical of the subjects discussed at Turner's daily staff meeting is the one this particular morning about the flow of arms into the Middle East. The French are selling weapons in the area at what American analysts view as an alarming rate.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I would have thought the ability of the United Arab Emirates to absorb many arms would be fairly limited. Isn't their population very small?

MAN: That's right. It's a small population but lots of money. And a part of this arrangement is to provide weapons to other Arab states.

RATHER: There is at least a mythology among reporters around the world...

ADMIRAL TURNER: There are lots of mythologies about intelligence.

RATHER: Well, one of them is that the best intelligence operation in the world belongs to Israel, the second-best belongs to the Soviet Union, and that ours is no better than the third-best in the world.

Do you agree with that assessment?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I don't agree with that at all. I suspect that the Israelis have a very capable intelligence operation, but there's no way a country with their resources can possibly cover the scope of affairs that we can.

I think we're ahead of the Soviets. We have better technology, and I just don't think you can do the kind of interpretation and research that we can -- you can't get this in a closed society, like a communist country.

RATHER: When our government gets an early indication that

Cuban, quote, experts are moving into Ethiopia, is it the primary responsibility of the DIA, the CIA, or the State Department to feed to the President quickly an early read on what that means and what his options may be?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, it's really my responsibility, as the Director of Central Intelligence, to get that factual information to him.

RATHER: But the President looks to you to give him that report.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes. If something happens like that and he's caught short, I'm the fellow who holds the bag.

RATHER: Once a week the Director meets with the President and the President's assistant for national security, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

ADMIRAL TURNER: The first item on our agenda is a reprint of the chart I gave you last week on the Israeli election results....

I had given him a chart which showed the results of the Israeli election, so he was able to mathematically see where we stood, what combination of parties could possibly form a viable government: Is it going to be strong? Is it going to have a particular complexion?

RATHER: Did he ask you for a last line as to whether the outcome of this was going to help or hurt the chances for peace in the area?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, no. That's more his judgment than mine. He's the man who's talked with them and has a great feel for them, and so I don't presume to tell him exactly how things are going to come out. I try to tell him that these factors will push that government in this direction or these factors will push them in the other direction. And the buck stops with him.

RATHER: Unlike what he said in the campaign, Mr. Carter now praises the CIA highly.

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER: I don't know of anything that's been a more pleasant surprise than to learn about the competence and the professionalism of the CIA and the other intelligence agencies. And one of the great things about it is that when I need information in a hurry, it's always there.

RATHER: If it's human spy work that needs doing, generally speaking the CIA will do it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Generally speaking, yes.

RATHER: Give me some feel, if you can, for how those decisions are made. Does the President get directly involved in these kinds of decisions?

ADMIRAL TURNER: In some cases, yes. Again, it depends on the degree of risk involved. We never undertake a sensitive intelligence operation without carefully looking at several factors:

One, can we do it in an overt way, without taking any risks?

Two, if we have to take a risk, is the potential reward going to be worth that risk?

RATHER: And the President sometimes makes that decision.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, indeed.

RATHER: Since you've been in, have you taken that kind of decision to him?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

RATHER: Did he decide yes or no?

ADMIRAL TURNER: [Laughter] It happened in this case he decided yes. But it's not always that way. It's a very difficult decision in every instance.

Now, we have very clear regulations for certain types of what we call covert activities, where we are required to get the President's signature before we go ahead on something that sensitive, and then we are required to notify the appropriate committees of the United States Congress.

RATHER: Realistically, can we keep many secrets that way? Can we keep a covert action covered if you have to go through that many steps?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, I think we can. The committees of the Congress involved in this have been very responsible in this regard. Obviously, the more people you involve in any secret, the more the probability of disclosure goes up.

RATHER: I have to believe, Admiral, that if I'm a spy on the line, I'm going to be very nervous, particularly these days, to hear you talk that way.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely. We have had a poor record in recent months. The disclosure of the King Hussein allegation; that cost us a great deal, not just in Jordan, but around the world. The number of people who work for us who have come in and said, "Can we risk continuing working for you?"

RATHER: I don't want to spend too much time on it, but in the King Hussein case, do you blame the press for that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't blame the press. I think the press has its own code of ethics, its own decisions to make on what it prints and what it doesn't, and whether they're harming the national security in doing so. I'm very concerned about the fact that this kind of information would leak...

RATHER: How did it leak?

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...to the press.

If I knew, we'd be taking some very definite actions to prevent it again, but I don't have that pinned down.

RATHER: You still don't know how that happened.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

RATHER: Do you see a line -- is there anything, in your judgment, immoral, unethical, illegal that you wouldn't do overseas?

ADMIRAL TURNER: There are many things about intelligence that are very difficult. There are many things that are, frankly, not fully decent. My job, in collecting intelligence, is to do the indecent things as decently as possible and to keep a floor of decency below which we will not stoop.

RATHER: Realistically, is that going to insure that we do not have happen again what has happened before? That is, employees of the National Security Agency doing such things as monitoring the telephone calls of Americans to South America.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm not accepting your allegations. I'm not either denying them or confirming them, because I haven't got into that particular instance you've raised in any detail at this point.

That kind of a charter will help, but basically it's the sum of oversight procedures that have been established that are going to and do give you and me the assurance against any possible abuses by any element of the intelligence community.

RATHER: Let me say to you frankly that one of the cases that has always intrigued me and, frankly, frightened me the most was the case of the shellfish toxin. The rough outline of this case, as alleged: President Nixon issued a written order saying, "We don't want any more shellfish toxin. We don't need that kind of thing. We want it destroyed." The allegation is that the then-Director of the CIA, Director Helms, issued a verbal order to destroy the shellfish toxin. Five years later we find that not

all of the toxin was destroyed.

This was the allegation. This is a rough outline of the story.

Now, where is the mechanism to keep that from happening again?

ADMIRAL TURNER: That mechanism is in the Director's sense of control of his operation, and there's no formula, there's no rule or law that's ever going to guarantee against it. But you've got to tell them when you give them order you expect it to be carried out. And then you've got to look through your agency and you've got to, with your intuition, with your best senses, find who are the people you feel have real integrity here, who are the people who have enthusiasm for carrying out the orders the way you want them carried out; and you've got to put them in charge of things.

I assure you if I found something like that going on, there'd be a lot of heads roll if I'd given an order and found out some weeks or months later that it wasn't carried out. You can't tolerate that in this kind of an organization. We have too sensitive a trust.

RATHER: In the building's main lobby, this is the Wall of Heroes. It is an unpleasant truth that some CIA agents have done things that were illegal and immoral. Partly because of that truth, it is often overlooked that other agents have performed acts inspirational and heroic, and that some die in the line of duty. Their acts are not heralded in newspaper headlines nor extolled in television newscasts. In some cases, even in death, there can be no names, only stars.